

## Small Group Discussion Questions

### *Heaven on Earth: the Book of Ruth*

*These questions are designed to invite group reflection on today's Bible passage and life application of the themes introduced in today's sermon.*

Weeks 1 and 2

#### Ruth 1:1-7

1. Share a time during which you felt as though your life had gone off track. What made you feel that way?
2. What are some early signs in Ruth 1 that life is not as it should be for Naomi and her people?
3. Life falls apart for Naomi. Do you think she bears any responsibility for her trouble? What outside factors contribute to Naomi's difficult circumstances?
4. Can you think of a time in which someone blamed you for a problem you were going through? Can you think of a time in which you blamed someone else for a problem, only to discover their situation was more complex than it seemed?
5. What is one sign that all is not lost for Naomi and her people?
6. Do you think that God can use difficulties and disappointments for His good purposes? Can you think of an example? Can you think of passages from the Bible or our church's confessions that support the idea that that even our hardest experiences serve God's good purposes?

*Pray:* For those in the midst of difficult circumstances. For those living with crushing disappointment. For those looking for God's hand at work and learning to trust God's purposes.

#### Ruth 1:8-22

1. Share a specific experience of disappointment or loss.
2. Did you (or do you) blame another person for losses you've experienced?
3. How have times of loss or struggle affected your perception of/relationship with God?
4. When you experience difficulty or disappointment, do you think of God as responsible for what happened? Why or why not?
5. Have you gone through a time that made you doubt God's presence in your life, or God's love for you?
6. Can you think of biblical examples of people who have suffered loss or hardship as part of God's bigger plan? Are there instances in which those people *did not* see the fulfillment of this plan? (for reference, consider Hebrews 11)
7. What evidence is there in Ruth 1 that Naomi and Ruth still have faith in the LORD God? What evidence is there that God has good plans for Naomi and Ruth?

*Pray:* For those grieving painful losses or challenges. For those struggling to trust Jesus' love and lordship.